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## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

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The Comprehensive Assessment and Management Analysis Program (CAMAP), which I established in March, completed its work in late May. CAMAP's purpose was two-fold: 1) to provide me with basic information to aid in decisions concerning the budgetary and personnel constraints SEA faces in the coming year; and 2) to examine the need and potential for adjustments after this first year of operation.

As part of the CAMAP operation, the Decision Unit teams for the 1981 Budget studied program components while another group studied our support functions. Special attention was given to coordination between the two groups by Ralph McCracken and to the impact on employees and our EEO efforts by Curt Deville and John Cowherd.

Although there are many more decisions still to be made, I have instructed the responsible SEA officials to take the following actions:

1. Combine and consolidate the Headquarters Operations Division and the Northeastern Regional Administrative Office. This action should improve overall effectiveness and efficiency in administrative services. The combined operation will be called the Administrative Operations Division (AOD) and will report to the Deputy Director for Administrative Management. AOD will operate with 33 fewer positions than the combined total of the two units it replaces.
2. Combine a number of positions currently in various units of Administrative Management to establish a Contracts Branch within AOD. This branch will be responsible for processing promptly all requests involving major acquisitions such as ADP, major equipment, construction and service contracts.
3. Streamline the Communications and Data Services Division (CDSD) to an overall size of less than 50 from the currently authorized 89. Ceiling slots will be saved by relying more on contract support and in addition certain functions will be transferred elsewhere. Careful analyses are to be made of the needs of, and services provided to, SEA field units and headquarters, and contract arrangements made for additional services in this area as appropriate.



4. Reduce the staff of the SEA accounting group by not filling vacancies, in anticipation of the USDA National Finance Center taking over this function in the near future.

5. Reduce the authorized size of the Organization and Management Development Staff (OMDS). Selected studies will be considered for accomplishing through contracting.

6. Consolidate the training and employee-development functions as much and as rapidly as feasible, using contracting procedures for training to the extent possible in helping us reduce personnel needs.

7. Consolidate the labor and management relations functions to the extent operationally feasible and where personnel requirements can be reduced.

8. Increase the use of contracts for engineering and design services while retaining a centralized, in-house core capability for management and supervision of these services.

9. Consolidate safety and health functions in the Administrative Services Division.

10. Pursue a vigorous program of using broad form cooperative agreements to obtain support services where feasible and where personnel efficiencies can be achieved.

11. Establish word processing capabilities wherever personnel efficiencies can be achieved and quality and timeliness of work can be assured.

I did not decide on any of the above actions without an awareness that they will affect many valued SEA employees and will require all of us to work in different ways than we are accustomed. These have been hard decisions, but they are the minimum initial steps necessary to address our need to operate with reduced personnel while providing effective and responsive support services.

More decisions are still to be made, and I will inform you of them as quickly as possible.

In the meantime:

- The AR Regional Administrators are being asked to prepare implementation proposals consistent with our recently announced policy of increased contracting for support services at the larger locations judged to have potential for such additional contracting. These include the Eastern, Northern and Southern Regional Research Centers; Plum Island Animal Disease Center; National Animal Disease Center; Richard B. Russell Research Center; and the Stoneville, Miss., location.



- The AR Regional Administrators are also being asked to comment on the feasibility of implementing Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) activities at locations with excess space and at new locations now under construction or planning.

- Because of our strong concerns about potential Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action implications of actions being considered, I am appointing a special committee to study this matter and make recommendations for strong new SEA EEO/Affirmative Action plans and procedures that will maximize protection and opportunities for minority and female employees.

Before turning to another subject, I would like to comment briefly on the information that was provided to me as a part of the support assessment effort. In April, a questionnaire on "Opportunities for Savings in SEA Support Functions" was distributed to managers, supervisors, and program and administrative staff specialists. The response to this request for suggestions was impressive both in terms of the number of responses (304) and the quality and range of suggestions.

I am grateful for the willingness of so many of you to prepare and submit such thoughtful, candid comments. I was impressed by our shared concern that SEA maintain its strong research and extension capability in the years to come; and that we take positive action to bring this about. A number of other messages also came through loud and clear, including the one that told Headquarters to take a good, hard look at itself! And finally, I also noted in reviewing the report presented to me by the support assessment group that in one way or another virtually every one of the questionnaire suggestions was addressed or included.

As I mentioned earlier, I still have work to do in deciding on other options--to implement, study further, or discard. I will be reaching out to many of you for follow-up information before I make decisions in some of these other areas. I hope to have all of this accomplished soon.

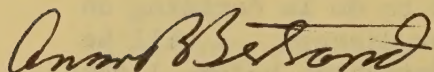
Our FY 1981 Budget development efforts are proceeding on schedule. The SEA Management Team and Decision Unit managers met for several days recently at which time we reviewed both ongoing programs and plans. We are now developing the budget justifications and supporting materials and will submit the budget request to the Department on July 13. Following this, I will present the budget to the Secretary and his key staff on July 30. While indicators point to another stringent budget environment for FY 1981, the Management Team and I will present SEA's current programs and most urgent needs constructively, objectively, and vigorously.

SEA minority contract awards increased significantly from FY-77 to FY-78--from \$1,011,169 to \$3,086,130, or from 8% to 14% of total awards, and thus exceeds our FY-79 goal of \$3 million. Our progress



in increasing minority awards over the last two years has been due to such actions as supplying SEA contracting officers with lists of minority businesses and vendors; distributing various materials to SEA contract officers and procurement officials on how to go about seeking out minority businesses; conducting training seminars on minority procurement (such as the one held for procurement officers of the former ARS in October 1977); distributing literature and brochures received from minority firms to SEA procurement officials; and including in delegations of procurement contract authority a specific requirement that SEA contracting officers take all actions possible to award contracts to minority business firms. In addition, the SEA Minority Business Enterprise Task Force which I established in October 1978 recently recommended, among other things, that I require a written justification in contract files whenever a minority business firm is not chosen for a contract award. I plan to implement this recommendation shortly. The Task Force also recommended that we work with our cooperators to increase their MBE efforts. CR and Extension have already taken steps to do so.

Editorial note: These intermittent letters of mine have to date gone unnumbered. Those of you who maintain a file on them will be interested to note that this letter is identified as No. 4 in the 1979 series. Previous letters are dated: January 22, April 11, April 30, 1979; October 18, December 26, 1978.



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